



Developing Leadership

Who? What? Where?



focusing on the current issues and building capability of people and organisations

Introduction

Developing Leadership—Who? What? Where? is intended to assist in the promotion of a broader understanding of leadership development issues in the public sector. It seeks to provide readers with a snapshot of current leadership development programs and other initiatives in a variety of Australian Public Service (APS) agencies. The resource was initially developed and co-sponsored by the Department of Defence and the Australian Public Service Commission (then PSMPC) as a result of the Developing Leadership Seminar held in September 2001.

One of the clear messages from the 2001 Developing Leadership Seminar, was the enthusiasm participants' had for case studies of leadership programs and more details about programs referred to during the Seminar. This updated volume will build on that information and provide contact points for those who want additional information.

The Leadership Development Network initiated by the APSC and supported by a number of other agencies, will continue to pursue the aims of the Seminar and to provide opportunities for interested agencies to pursue particular cases in more detail (including comments from those who participated in the programs described).

The 2003 Resource Guide has been updated by the Leadership, Learning and Development Group of the APSC, based on contributions from agencies who participated in the 2001 Developing Leadership Seminar together with other agencies who have expressed an interest in providing information on their current programs.

Other agencies who are interested in participating in this resource are encouraged to contact the Leadership, Learning and Development Group of the APSC on (02) 6271 6560.

Australian Public Service Commission

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Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

The ABS is Australia's official statistical agency. It provides statistics on a wide range of economic and social matters, covering government, business and population in general. It also has an important coordination function with respect to the statistical activities of other official bodies.

The ABS has a Central Office in Canberra and eight Regional Offices—one in each State and Territory capital city. The Regional Offices have responsibility for the Australia-wide operations of particular statistical collections, but overall program responsibility remains in Central Office. Regional Offices also allow the ABS to maintain close contact with State and Territory clients, including State government agencies, and with ABS data providers.

The ABS Mission is:

‘We assist and encourage informed decision making, research and discussion within governments and the community, by providing a high quality and responsive national statistical service’

Key Organisational Characteristics

The ABS has approximately 3000 staff across Australia, of which 1600 are located in the Central Office in Canberra. The average length of service in the ABS is 11.5 years, and the average age of ABS staff is 40 years.

In addition to the ongoing impact of substantial numbers of ABS staff making the transition from work to retirement, the ABS is faced with several current and emerging business priorities that are impacting upon the direction and focus of HR policies and strategies within the organisation.

ABS business priorities include:

- an increasing need for ABS staff to provide knowledge leadership through awareness of current and emerging statistical policy issues and debates;
- undertaking statistical coordination responsibilities and influencing non-ABS statistical activities;
- establishing and maintaining strong business partnerships with external agencies; and
- through close stakeholder consultation, development of a greater understanding of client needs.

ABS staff are also managing increasingly sophisticated user expectations of, and demands for, ABS statistics. This includes higher expectations of quality with informed users seeking access to a greater range of ABS products, and access to ABS staff for 'value added' interactions. The ABS is also committed to improving business processes through structural, functional and technological changes that enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness of the ABS.

The HRD environment

In recognition of the need to develop and maintain a skilled and flexible workforce, ABS is firmly committed to the provision of learning opportunities relevant to meeting current and future organisational needs. This commitment is reinforced in the ABS Corporate Plan, which recognises that people are the key to achieving the ABS mission, and that the ABS will support their development and well being.

ABS is committed to providing a range of learning and development opportunities for staff at all levels. This commitment includes, but is not limited to, a wide range of formal corporate development programs.

ABS encourages employees to embrace an ethos of learning that permeates daily work and interpersonal interactions.

ABS employees are encouraged to seek opportunities for learning beyond the training room to broaden their experience and improve their effectiveness.

The national Learning and Development (L&D) team recognise this and works in partnership with all ABS employees, and a wide variety of internal and external subject matter experts, to create learning experiences that are the platform upon which to base on the job learning, further personal career development and organisational growth.

Learning can be derived by formal and informal means, both within and external to the ABS. Formal courses, on line learning, utilisation of resources from ABS Learning Centres, on-the-job training, mentoring and importantly, day to day work experiences are all effective ways of learning. Achievement of a skilled and more effective workforce is seen as joint responsibility between managers, employees and the national L&D team of ABS.

Learning and Development

The Learning and Development (L&D) team is a national team that supports the training and development needs of the ABS. Provision of a range of development activities are streamed into some broad categories:

- Statistics and ABS Core Business Processes;
- Leadership and Management Development;
- Information Technology;
- On Line Learning; and
- Special Focus Projects (such as Project Management to deliver outcomes, Coaching and the National Statistical Training Institute).

Each Regional Office has full-time HR staff. There is strong communication and support amongst the Regional Office L&D areas, with resource sharing and participation in national programs and projects. The Central Office area, which has a team of approximately 20 staff engaged in a variety of HRD activities is also responsible for L&D related policy, strategic planning and management and national program design, development and delivery.

ABS HRD moved several years ago to access some training and related developmental services from external sources. This required a broadening of the skills base of HRD staff to include contract management, project management and relationship management. ABS has successfully implemented this approach which has resulted in L&D staff developing a strong blend of skills and experience nationally to service the organisation and deliver improvements in workforce capability.

In operation, the ABS L&D follows a simple model of instructional design:

- needs analysis and identification;
- design of solution;
- development of solution;
- delivery of solution; and
- evaluation.

ABS has a sophisticated system of analysing and identifying learning needs. Each staff member has in place a formal performance agreement and a number of approaches have been applied to individual learning plans. A Lotus Notes based system for recording and analysing needs has been developed internally. The various business groups across the country all have peak forums for the discussion of learning and development needs in their line business areas.

At the highest level, an ABS Human Resource Strategy Committee provides strategic direction to L&D, and all aspects of HR, to make decisions on matters of budget and relative priority for competing needs. A feature of this approach to the management of learning and development within the ABS is the continued and strong commitment from the Senior Executive of the organisation.

L&D National Leadership and Management Group

The primary task of this team is to position the ABS, and its people, to meet the business and people management challenges of the future. The value added of the National Leadership and Management team to the ABS is realised through our collective expertise, experience and commitment to the ABS, its people, and values. By engaging with the diversity of experience and views of team members in developing programs, ABS seeks consistent quality outcomes through shared ownership of all national Leadership and Management Development Strategies.

The group seeks to assist, influence and support the decision making process within the ABS through our collective links to the ABS Human Resource Strategy Committee (ABSHRSC), Regional Director's (RD's)

and L&D Managers. Team members work in partnership with line business when developing interventions and seek advice on how to respond to, and implement, the strategic directions for learning that emerge from the ABSHRSC, RD's and the L&D Director.

A joint venture between the Central Office and regional L&D Management was undertaken to revise and implement the National Leadership & Management Learning Strategy. The strategy defines management learning as learning activities related to, and supporting, the successful realisation of the strategic objectives and core business of the ABS. The strategy adopts a continuous learning approach which defines the accumulation and application of management information, skills, competencies, knowledge and experience. This framework is designed to bring together the comprehensive collection of national programs that fall under the umbrella of L&D Leadership and Management Development.

ABS Leadership & Management Development Strategic Goals

1. Actively support the ABS achieve its strategic goals and organisational mission as articulated in the ABS Corporate Plan.
2. Leadership and Management learning activities will focus on enabling ABS core business and align with corporate directions and priorities
3. Leadership and Management development activities provide cost effective options which are flexible and adaptable to meet divergent national needs and strive for continuous improvement.
4. The National Leadership and Management Development Team will strive to continuously improve integration of management and leadership development with Statistical and Information Technology development activities.
5. The National Leadership and Management Development Team will work collaboratively with regionally located national team members to develop and maintain ABS national standards regarding training of presenters, development of learning resources and ensure national consistency and direction in the provision of leadership and management learning activities.
6. National equity of access to management learning activities will remain a high priority.
7. Leadership and Management Development activities will incorporate and reinforce APS Values, APS Code of Conduct, Occupational Health and Safety Guidelines and Diversity principles.

The major benefits of taking a nationally strategic approach such as this include:

- Provides one ABS approach to development and fosters consistency in message;
- Provides a development 'road map' for the individual;
- Provides a foundation for other HR systems;
- Provides a guide for staff and managers; and
- Provides efficiency through the coordination of effort and elimination of duplication

Delivery of Leadership & Management Development in ABS

Where solutions to identified needs require a 'training' activity, the ABS National Leadership and Management Development Team performs an expert 'training brokerage' function on behalf of the ABS. This involves a national team of internal human resource development (HRD) specialists identifying internal needs and linking the servicing of those needs to the best possible external providers.

To streamline this process, a National Leadership and Management 'Preferred Provider Panel' has been established. Providers appointed to this panel are required to provide services in relation to the design, development, delivery and evaluation of management and leadership training on an 'as needs' basis. This arrangement allows for a combination of both menu and demand driven training courses and provides the flexibility to respond to critical issues and changing corporate priorities.

The ABS National Preferred Provider Panel comprises training providers specialising in strategic HRD planning, others that are ideally suited to develop detailed instructional strategies for specialist needs and specific target groups, and training providers with extensive menus to deliver the most cost effective training for the largest target groups. This panel provides the highest quality services to the ABS and is able to meet corporate leadership and management development requirements.

A combination of menu and demand driven training courses and programs also provides ABS with the flexibility to respond to critical issues and changing corporate priorities. It also supports the maintenance of an overarching ABS HRD strategy as well as the application of the variety of learning solutions that underpin such a strategy.

The National Leadership and Management Development Team works in close partnership with panelists to ensure that leadership and management training sits firmly within the overall strategic context set by the ABS National Human Resource Management Strategy Committee, and that organisational development and change is effected.

ABS Leadership and Management Development Programs 2003–2005

Flexible learning in the ABS incorporates distance elements, classroom based and on the job learning, the development of a network of 'Learning Centres' to facilitate self paced learning, plus, the increasing use of multi-media and 'on line' learning. The development of managers and leaders in ABS is based upon a simple construct of focus on self, team, the business of the ABS, and our external environment. Content varies dependant upon focus group, but outcomes of all programs are consistent with developing staff in the above dimensions. Whilst budget and need determine year to year priorities and extent of provision of certain programs, the key corporate leadership and management programs in the ABS are:

ABS Leadership Program (ABSLP)

A succession management program focused on the development needs of staff in the SES feeder group. This program is national and from time to time, opportunities for participation are extended to leading international statistical professionals and agencies. This program is conducted on an as needs basis, generally, about every eighteen months.

ABS Strategic Management Program (ABSSMP)

A national succession management program focused on the development needs of staff in the Executive Level 2 feeder group for staff considered likely to be promoted to this level in the medium term. This program addresses needs driven by succession management and planning issues in the ABS and is run on an as need basis.

ABS Manager Development Program (ABSMDP)

This program is focused on the development needs of staff who are in middle management roles within the ABS (APS6–EL1). The content develops the skills and experience required by managers at this level and focuses on developing knowledge and capability required to enable and maximise performance of staff and effectively manage in a dynamic APS/ABS change environment.

ABS Introduction to Management Program (ABSIMP)

This program is focused on the development needs of staff in front-line management or supervisory roles (APS4–5). The content develops the skills and knowledge required by managers at this level and focuses on developing knowledge and capability required to effectively manage in a dynamic APS/ABS change environment.

In addition to the core corporate training programs, specific seminars and self-contained short courses are also conducted to target priority, emerging and topical issues. Examples of priority training issues include:

- Performance Management;
- Coaching in the workplace;
- On-the-job training;
- Change Management;
- Project Management; and
- Business Analysis.

Emerging and topical issues include:

- Government and agency reform; and
- Changes and Innovations in the ABS Business Environment.

There are also ongoing seminars and presentations arranged across the ABS and delivered by ABS subject matter experts.

Contacts

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